



Orange County Government
Office of County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus
NEWS RELEASE

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**County Executive Neuhaus presents Mary Sumter of Chester with
April's Citizen of the Month Award**

*Sumter has been an integral part of A.U.M.P. Church in Goshen for 62 years,
serving many different roles*

Goshen, N.Y. – Orange County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus has recognized Chester's Mary Sumter as the Citizen of the Month Award winner for the month of April.

Sumter, 82, has been a member of the St. John African Union Methodist Protestant Church (A.U.M.P.) in Goshen since 1955. She is St. John's lead local missionary and has run the church's Ecumenical Food Pantry, which she founded, for the past 26 years. The Ecumenical Food Pantry distributes 270 bags of food each month with the help of volunteers of all ages, which Sumter supervises.

Prior to her work with the food pantry, Sumter served as St. John's secretary and treasurer.

"Mary Sumter is a remarkable woman and her contributions to the church are inspirational," Neuhaus said. "Through her service at St. John's, she has had a positive impact on hundreds of residents for more than six decades. We all appreciate Mary's dedication to her church. She is beloved by the members at St. John's and respected by the entire community."

To many in the community, St. John's is simply known as "Mrs. Sumter's Church." As the church's lead local missionary, she visits sick residents in hospitals and nursing homes, spending time praying with them and their families.

Sumter, a retired Physical Therapist with New York State, sings at every church service.

Sumter grew up in the former Hamlet of Roseton, located outside of Newburgh, and graduated from Newburgh Free Academy in 1953. She joined St. John A.U.M.P. in 1955 after meeting her husband, Harold, a Goshen native. The couple had four children and also raised seven foster children. Harold Sumter passed away in 1993.

Sumter said she was inspired to volunteer and give back to the community by her mother, Joanna Bell-Coleman. Coleman would prepare home-cooked meals for new neighbors and have young Mary and her siblings deliver them. Their mother would also make meals for sick people in the community, instructing Mary to bring them to the home with a clean washcloth. She was always required to bring the dishes back home and wash them.

“My mother was a wonderful missionary and she influenced us all,” Sumter said. “I have always been honored to carry on what she has taught me and I’m proud that my children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews all spend time volunteering. It’s extremely rewarding to help someone and it’s what I do best. I’m humbled that County Executive has recognized me and this wonderful church.”

Neuhaus introduced his Citizen of the Month Award, which acknowledges outstanding Orange County residents, in January. To nominate someone for the Citizen of the Month Award, please email ceoffice@orangecountygov.com or mail a letter to “Citizen of the Month” at 255-275 Main Street Goshen, N.Y. 10924. Be sure to include the nominee’s name, hometown, a list of their accomplishments, why you are nominating them and any other pertinent information. Nominees must be from Orange County.

For more information, contact Justin Rodriguez, Assistant to the County Executive for Communications and Media Relations at 845.291.3255 or jrodriguez@orangecountygov.com.

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Orange County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus and Mary Sumter of the St. John African Union Methodist Protestant Church (A.U.M.P.) in Goshen.